

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W

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O 281600Z FEB 78

FM AMEMBASSY LAGOS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6807

C O N F I D E N T I A L LAGOS 2541

EXDIS

DEPT PASS WHITE HOUSE

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: OVIP (CARTER, JIMMY)

SUBJECT: PRESIDENTIAL TRIP: PUBLIC STATEMENTS

REF: (A) USIS AFRICA WIRELESS FILE 38 OF FEBRUARY 24

(B) LAGOS 2409

1. MEA AMERICAS DEPARTMENT DIRECTOR MUSA TOLD POLITICAL COUNSELOR FEBRUARY 28 THAT HEAD OF STATE OBASANJO HAD, AS HE HAD PREDICTED (REF B), BEEN 'EXTREMELY UNHAPPY' THAT THE TEXT OF THE PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT REGARDING THE PRESIDENT'S FORTHCOMING TRIP TO NIGERIA (STATE TELS 47139, 47433 & 47751) HAD NOT BEEN CLEARED WITH HIM, AND THE TIMING OF THE RELEASE HAD NOT BEEN COORDINATED IN ADVANCE. LATER THE SAME DAY, HOWEVER, ALEX NWOKEDI, PRESS SECRETARY AT THE SUPREME MILITARY HEADQUARTERS, TOLD PAO LEWIS THAT THE UNHAPPINESS ON THIS SUBJECT STEMMED NOT FROM OBASANJO HIMSELF BUT FROM 'OTHERS'.

2. REPORTS OF THIS REACTION HAVE INCREASED THE CONCERN WHICH WE FELT WHEN READING THE TEXT OF DR. BRZEZINSKI'S PRESS CONFERENCE REMARKS ON THE PRESIDENTIAL TRIP TO NIGERIA WHICH WAS CARRIED IN USIA AFRICA WIRELESS FILE 38. ACCORDING TO THE WIRELESS FILE, DR. BRZEZINSKI STATED THAT
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PRESIDENT CARTER AND GENERAL OBASANJO 'WILL ALSO DISCUSS THE BEST WAY TO END THE ETHIOPIAN-SOMALI CONFLICT AND ITS ATTENDANT INTRUSION BY SOVIET AND CUBAN FORCES INTO AFRICAN AFFAIRS' INASMUCH AS THE FMG, WHICH IS CHAIRMAN OF THE OAU'S GOOD OFFICES COMMISSION FOR RESOLUTION OF THE OGADEN CONFLICT, HAS BEEN EXTREMELY CAREFUL IN ITS PUBLIC STATEMENTS NOT TO DEPART FROM NEUTRAL PHRASEOLOGY REGARDING THE

CONFLICT, WE DO NOT BELIEVE OBASANJO OR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS COMMISSIONER GARBA WOULD BE HAPPY TO READ THIS STATEMENT IN THEIR MORNING NEWSPAPERS. SENSITIVITY ON THIS SCORE MAY BE EVEN GREATER AT PRESENT BECAUSE A ETHIOPIAN DELEGATION HAS FINALLY COME TO LAGOS TO DISCUSS THE CONFLICT IN THE HORN.

3. DR. BRZEZINSKI ALSO MENTIONED THAT THE PRESIDENT EXPECTED TO DELIVER HIS MAJOR ADDRESS IN LAGOS. AT THE TIME WHEN THESE REMARKS WERE MADE THE MOST RECENT INFORMATION WE HAD WAS THAT OBASANJO WANTED THE SPEECH TO BE GIVEN IN KANO. THE MATTER HAS NOT YET BEEN SETTLED EVEN AT PRESENT WRITING AND WE THEREFORE THINK THAT A PUBLIC STATEMENT ON THE SUBJECT IS NOT DESIREABLE.

4. BECAUSE OF THE SENSITIVITY OF GENERAL OBASANJO AND THE FMG GENERALLY REGARDING MATTERS OF THIS KIND, WE BELIEVE THAT MORE CARE SHOULD BE TAKEN IN WASHINGTON THEN IS USUALLY NECESSARY TO AVOID STATEMENTS ON WHAT THE TWO LEADERS WILL DISCUSS OR ON THE CONTENTS OF THE PRESIDENT'S SCHEDULE BEFORE THE FMG HAS AGREED TO IT.
EASUM

NOTE BY OC/T: NOT PASSED WHITE HOUSE.

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NNN

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